

## **LONG LAKE MEADOWS/SPRING MEADOWS HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION**

Annual Meeting - Thursday, November 6, 2014 - 7:30-8:30 pm  
Wass Elementary School – LGI Room

### Minutes

The meeting was attended by 24 individuals; 5 of which are Board members. Attendance was a 50 percent increase from 2013.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by President Barb Vleko.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Members of the Board in attendance: Barb Vleko, Sandy Paci, Matt Kukla, Frank Faron, and Jim Gabrysh. The Board introduced themselves stating where they lived and the role(s) they have as a member, both past and present.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT – MATT KUKLA**

The treasurer's report for fiscal calendar year (2014-2015) was reviewed (attached). Each line item and column was reviewed and reasons behind the actual vs. budget expenses were discussed. Additional conversation centered on the expenses for the social activities, web site, the retention basin, and the insurance for the basin and Board members. As shown on the expense report, all expenses incurred are documented. The balance on the expense report matches the balance in the checking account.

Every third quarter the Board discusses how much the dues will be for the homeowners. The Board takes into consideration the expenses paid and upcoming expenditures. Dues are collected from the homeowners in Long Lake Meadows 1 and 2 and Spring Meadows. While homeowners in Long Lake Meadows 3 and 4 are not Association members, they still have an obligation to pay for their use of the retention basin. The number of homes in the Association is 190; 230 homes pay yearly dues.

The dues for Fiscal Year 2015 (January 1 through December 31) will remain the same as they have for several years; \$30 for homeowners in Long Lake Meadows 3 and 4 and \$75 for the balance of homeowners. The Board has managed to reduce expenses in many areas and have allocated those funds to increase the maintenance of the retention basin and the open space areas.

A question was raised as to how many homes the difference of \$3,500 equates to. Matt stated that between 10-12 homes in the Association have outstanding balances. This outstanding number has a negative effect in forecasting future expenditures.

A question was raised as to how much it costs to put a lien on a house. The amount is staggering: approximately \$100, which includes the required paperwork to file. What the amount does not include is the manual time it takes the Board to create the lien or the Board member's time to drive to/from the Oakland County Courthouse to file the lien. The Board member filing the lien will be reimbursed by the Association for his or her mileage. The charge per mile is determined by the state. The Board member could also spend his or her "vacation" day driving to/from the Courthouse or adjust their day's activities to accommodate this task.

- A homeowner has volunteered to investigate as to the process of placing a lien.
- A homeowner familiar with liens stated she did not believe a lawyer was required to file a lien because the process was easy and straightforward enough for someone to follow.

Matt stated that either the title company or real estate agent reaches out to the treasurer (via the web site email address) to ensure the homeowner is in good standing in the payment of dues at the time of closing. At times, the title company or agent sends an email to the treasurer the day of closing and this is not acceptable; advance notification is appreciated. The treasurer does not keep the Association's accounting records in his back pocket.

## **COMMON AREAS**

Barb asked the attendees: "What are the common areas"? Barb stated that this question is frequently raised to the Board. Barb said the common areas include:

1. The four islands (Saffron Court, Palmetto, Cloister Court, and Julian)
2. The pond
3. The grassy area around the retention basin
4. The two entrances (Saffron Drive and Spring Meadows Drive)

As a reminder to all homeowners, the Association is responsible for the maintenance of the retention basin. The developer of the subdivisions, the city of Troy, or Oakland County are not responsible. The property of the homeowners located in Long Lake Meadows 1 and 2 and Spring Meadows drain into the retention basin. And while the homeowners in Long Lake Meadows 3 and 4 are not members of the Association, their property drains into the retention basin. The retention basin cannot be dredged. The retention basin was designed to ensure basements in the homes of the Association do not back up. Unless, of course, Mother Nature takes over (like in August 2014), and a few homes had water problems in the basement. Bottom line: the Association will ensure the retention basin is treated properly and maintained throughout the year.

## **NEW SIGNS FOR RETENTION BASIN AREA**

At the request from the Association's insurance company, the current signs (three) located at the walkways off Crowfoot and Spring Meadows and on the south side of the retention basin, will be replaced. The signs currently read "don't feed the fowl". The new signs will now read:

- Open space area is for the residents in LLM/SM residents only
- No boating, dumping, fishing, or swimming
- Do not feed the wildlife
- Take your items you brought with you

Quotes will be obtained and signs will be purchased and installed.

## **LAWN SERVICE**

In early 2014, quotes from 3-5 companies were obtained for lawn service around the retention basin, Long Lake Road, and the four islands. In reviewing the quotes, the Board compares apples to apples; and Decorative Lawn, one of the companies who provided a quote, came in with the lowest bid. Unfortunately, the Board and a number of homeowners are dissatisfied with the service Decorative Lawn provided this year. So, in early January, the Board will reach out to lawn service companies and requests quotes. If a homeowner has lawn service, and would recommend them, please send an email to the president with the name and contact number for the company. The Board will be happy to add them to the list of companies to request a quote.

- In 2015, the four islands within the subdivision will receive a thorough cleaning and trimming and mulch will be added.

## **TREE MAINTENANCE**

The trees and bushes along the retention basin and along the berm (sidewalk) on Long Lake Road were planted more than 25 years ago. Over time, they have matured; and it is time to trim and cut back the trees and branches. This will ensure steady growth and allow the lawn service to mow and whip around the trees and bushes more effectively. Three quotes from tree service companies were obtained; and apples to apples were compared. Scott Warnke Tree Service was contracted to oversee the trimming and cutting. Weather permitting, the service is scheduled November 13 and 14.

- As information, if a tree or bush is cut down during this maintenance, it will not be immediately replaced. The area in which the tree or bush was planted needs a year or two to "breathe." After this time, if funds are available, the necessary trees and bushes will be replaced.

## **ENTRANCE SIGNS**

The subdivision signs on Saffron Drive were installed 25 years ago. While members on the Board, both present and past, repaired and painted the signs, they need to be replaced in a couple of years. At this time, there is no subdivision sign on Spring Meadows; and if the two signs on Saffron Drive are replaced, one or two signs on Spring Meadows will be installed. A wooden sign (similar to the current one) may not be the most economical. It may be more economical to purchase and install signs made out of stones or a rock with the name of the subdivisions. This type will last longer. Replacement of or the purchase of subdivision signs is dependent on the Association's funds. The Board will pursue this issue in early 2015.

## **WALKWAYS**

If you have ever walked to Wass Elementary using the walkway off Crowfoot; or to the retention basin using the walkways off Crowfoot or Spring Meadows, you may have noticed that the wood rails are in need of repair. A number of years ago the rails were repaired. As the subdivision is 25 years old, it is time to replace the rails. Are you handy with a saw, wooden posts, and rails? If you are, the Board could use you! If you are interested in helping with the replacement of the rails, please send an email to the president. The assistance of homeowners would reduce the cost for a company to replace the rails, and it would give YOU an opportunity to meet your fellow homeowners. The Board will pursue this issue in early 2015.

## **WEB SITE - LLMSMHOA.ORG**

Matt advised to ensure continuity on the Board, the web site is used as a central location for references, including the Association's documents. Documents may not get passed on from one homeowner to another; but with the web site, one can easily locate specific documents. As all documents are loaded in the web site, this electronic capability avoids any unforeseen situations. As officers change every two years, if you send an email to the Association's president, for example, the web site is designed to route that email to the current president. The same is true for the other officers as well as the Welcome Wagon. Turnaround time from that individual to the sender is usually within a week.

- One recommendation to help offset the cost of maintaining the web site is to place ads on the web site. While the Association will not endorse ads, it is suggested if the ad is for a homeowner's company, and are willing to purchase "ad space," please send a note to the web master with details of the ad.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Holiday contest – The holiday contest will take place in December. Two winners will be selected in each category: the "best lighting display" and the "best wreath display." This year, we will have first and second place for "honorable mention." Every year, selecting the winners are a difficult decision for the judges.

Biannual garage sale – As the garage sale is scheduled biannually, mark your calendar for 2015! The subdivision garage sale will be scheduled on Saturday, May 16; the Saturday after Mother's Day. A flyer will be distributed in the "newspaper" box a few weeks prior to May 16. To avoid extra vehicular and foot traffic throughout the year, this "community" effort on a biannual basis reduces traffic throughout the subdivisions.

## **MANAGEMENT COMPANY OR AN ACCOUNTING FIRM**

Within the Association, there are 190 homes; 380 people if you figure two adults per home. Over the past few years, there have been 5 members on the Board. While the Board does its best to cover all issues, at times, it is difficult. Homeowners may not know, but someone on the Board, for example, is "assigned" to obtain quotes from lawn service companies. By the time this information is obtained and agreed to by all members on the Board, it could take up to two weeks. The Board may have to schedule a meeting or most likely, exchange email to get consensus. Other examples include a discussion with the insurance company to ensure the wording on the retention basin (pond) sign is updated. All processes takes time.

If the Association was to contract "to do's" to a management company, additional costs for each homeowner will be added to the yearly dues. The amount for the homeowner would be responsible for depends on what the Association wants the management company to perform. Something to think about: some management companies charge \$400



per homeowner per year or even \$75 a month. As you note on the 2015 budget report, dues (\$75) have not increased for two years; and the Board wants to keep the dues as low as possible. So, how much are YOU willing to pay?

Another option would be for the Association to contract with an accounting firm who would oversee the financials; i.e. invoices. Again, the dues for homeowners would increase based on what the Association contracts with an accounting firm.

Why bring up the subject of a "management company" or an "accounting firm?" The Association's documents state we need a minimum of five members on the Board. If we have less than five, we must go to a management company. In previous years, there has been up to 15 members serving some type of role on the Board.

We hope a number of homeowners step up to the plate to volunteer their time and become members on the Board. Barb asked: why should YOU become a member on the board? From Barb's experience, it's a chance to know your fellow homeowners, it's a great learning experience, and it is rewarding. The more volunteers, the more tasks can be completed and closed. The Board does not want to contract with a management company or an accounting firm. Consider joining. The Board wants to keep the integrity within the Association.

The subdivisions are aging, and there is so much work that needs to be done. Homeowners need to be more involved. For example, a homeowner came forward stating he is familiar with the design of "logos" and would be willing to design one for the Association. This item will be discussed in early 2015.

Barb reminded the attendees to be sure to fill out the form for voting and to add your name if you would like to volunteer on upcoming tasks.

Voting footnote - Four people signed on as Board members for 2015 and two previous Board members cannot serve as full-time members but would be willing to work with the Board if needed and based on their availability.

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

A question was asked by a homeowner who lives near the walkway off Crowfoot regarding the split rail fence. When the time comes to repair or replace the rail, would the Board consider removing the fence on the north side of the sidewalk. The homeowner advised she will maintain the lawn. As a reminder, the developer installed two fences, one on either side of the sidewalk. The Board will discuss the split rail fence at a future meeting.

A homeowner asked if the Board could send a "volunteer" letter to the homeowners requesting volunteers to join. Barb indicated that the "Special Notice", which accompanied the flyer for the annual meeting addressed the "volunteer" issue.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Barb thanked the homeowners who attended, and the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.